

AMIGOS ON THE MOVE—Jim Wren, left, president of Amigos Internacionales, tells Robert E. Dixon, executive secretary of Texas Baptist Men, about a medical-dental mobile clinic ministry planned for British Honduras. Amigos has signed a contract with the British Honduras government to begin operations in 1972. TBMA will assist Amigos in finding

Texas Baptist Men Plans Assistance

Amigos To Help British Honduras

By Robert O'Brien

Amigos Internacionales, a non-profit mission action organization for Christian laymen based in Athens, Tex., has signed a contract with the government of British Honduras to operate mobile medical-dental units in the country beginning January, 1972.

The units will be staffed by physicians and dentists on the volunteer rosters of Amigos.

Amigos President Jim Wren, a Southern Baptist, said his organization needs 125 physicians, 125 dentists and 50 other Christian laymen with a wide range of professional skills to add to its roster before beginning the once-a-week flights into British Honduras.

Wren, who also serves on the Executive Board of Texas Baptist Men, said TBM will help in the search for additional qualified personnel and supplies.

The Amigos organization has been deeply involved since its organization five years ago in medical missions projects of the River Ministry of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and with projects of Texas Baptist Men.

The organization was formed through the efforts of Wren and John LaNoue, now a youth associate in the Texas Baptist State Missions Commission. LaNoue built Amigos first mobile unit when he was Baptist Student Union director at Henderson County Junior College.

British Honduras, located below the Yucatan Peninsula, has a high literacy rate but is in need of skilled professionals. Skilled laymen, besides medical personnel, would be made available to consult with the government about how to improve facilities and services. They would include engineers, agricultural specialists, teachers, cattlemen, veterinarians, construction engineers and many other categories of people.

"From the top personnel of government and industry to the Indian living in a thatched hut, the country is wide open up for Christians to minister to spiritual and physical needs," says Wren. "The door is wide open through this project for evangelism. Our effectiveness will be increased because British Honduras is an English-speaking country."

The agreement, signed by

Wren and the Hon. C.L.B. Rogers, the country's Minister of Home Affairs and Health, took nearly three years to formulate.

Besides staff, Amigos will provide drugs and equipment and will operate under the Ministry of Health's chief medical officer. Only one government physician is currently available in each district of British Honduras.

Three initial units Amigos will operate will not compete with existing national medical, dental, nursing or drug dispensing facilities and all professional personnel must be approved by the chief medical officer.

However, Wren says, government leaders have agreed to license qualified medical personnel and will waive customs duties on all Amigos equipment and supplies.

Wren sees the British Honduras venture as "the cornerstone upon which to build a medical-dental ministry that will expand into other parts of Central and South America in the Caribbean area."

The Belize Times, published in Belize City, British Honduras, noted that the new policy is designed "to take medical service to every nook and corner of our country...."

Amigos will provide transportation from point of origin of the professional personnel and all internal transportation and lodging. Amigos will set up living facilities at its base in Stann Creek Town. The country's government has offered the use of government houses until Amigos facilities are ready.

In the initial stages, Amigos will operate a land mobile unit in Punta Gorda in British Honduras's Toledo District and a land unit in the Stann Creek District. A barge clinic will reach some 10,000 people, accessible primarily by water.

Christian physicians, dentists and other professionals interested in volunteering varying amounts of time for service in the projects should contact Wren at P.O. Box 444, Athens, Tex. 78701 or Robert E. Dixon, 410 Baptist Building, Dallas 75201.

Mr. O'Brien is a press representative for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and editor of The Voice of Mission Action.

